



Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes

Town Council

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk (860)441-6640
Town Manager
(860)441-6630

Mayor Harry A. Watson, Councilors Peter J. Bartinik, Jr., Natalie Burfoot Billing, Heather Sherman Bond, Catherine Kolnaski, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Paulann H. Sheets, Thomas J. Skrmetti, and Elissa T. Wright.

Tuesday, September 6, 2005

7:30 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

I. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Mayor Harry Watson.

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent, Town Clerk Barbara Tarbox, and Office Assistant Elga Concepcion.

Mayor Watson noted that Councilor Bond would arrive later after attending Fitch High School's open house.

Members Present: Mayor Watson, Councilor Bartinik, Jr., Councilor Billing, Councilor Bond, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor Sheets and Councilor Skrmetti

Members Absent: Councilor O'Beirne, Jr. and Councilor Wright

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Salute to the Flag was led by the Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent.

III. RECOGNITION, AWARDS & MEMORIALS

None.

IV. CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Dan Tarasevich, 30 Tower Avenue, was disturbed that he could not get a removal permit because the taxes on a mobile home he did not own were not paid at the time. He expressed his concern regarding cars at the Dunkin' Donuts on Long Hill Road.

V. RESPONSES TO CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Responding to Mr. Tarasevich's comments regarding Dunkin' Donuts, Councilor Bartinik agreed that the cars were problematic. Mayor Watson noted that the only solution may be to have an officer at that location. This issue may be brought up at the next Traffic Authority meeting at the end of this month.

Town Clerk Tarbox noted to Councilor Bartinik that she received the Freedom of Information letter from Mr. Tarasevich, but because she was not the custodian of the records that he was asking for, she transferred the letter to the Finance Director. A State law was passed several years ago declaring that mobile homes were real property and so the record of ownership is recorded on the land records. To remove that piece of real property from the park, there has to be a removal statement and that can only be filed by the mobile home owner.

VI. CONSENT CALENDAR

a. Approval of Minutes

2005-0245

Approval of Minutes (Town Council)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council Meeting of August 16, 2005 are hereby accepted and approved.

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

Councilor Sheets would like the minutes of August 16, 2005 amended to indicate that the full text of the original resolution regarding restrictions on Town owned property appears in the minutes of the July 5, 2005 meeting.

b. Deletions from the Town Council Referral List

2004-0325 Recognition of John Ledyard

2005-0169 Donation of Land (Poirier)

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2005-0242 AFSCME Collective Bargaining Agreement and Pension Agreement

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2005-0243 USWA Pension Agreement

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2005-0244 Support for CILU Tentative Collective Bargaining Agreement

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

c. Special Trust Fund Contributions

2005-0237 Special Trust Fund Contributions

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPECIAL TRUST FUNDS

RESOLVED, that the Town Council hereby accepts contributions to the Town as follows:

Various Donations- \$200.00 - Maritime Academy Program

Various Donations - \$433.64 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program

City of Groton - \$59.10 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program

J. Donald and Jean Simpson - \$60.00 - Social Services Discretionary

Mary Ray - \$100.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving

Stan and Louise Smith - \$25.00 - Library Discretionary

Various Donations - \$20.00 - Arts Cafe

Various Donations - \$4,600.00 - Tercentennial

Various Donations - \$13,991.52 - Parks and Recreation Revolving

Various Donations - \$55.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving

Various Donations - \$425.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

Passed The Consent Calendar

A motion was made by Councilor Bartinik, Jr., seconded by Councilor Billing, to adopt the Consent Calendar, including all the preceding items marked as having been adopted on the Consent Calendar.

The motion carried unanimously.

VII. COMMUNICATION REPORTS (Other than Committee Reports)

a. Town Councilors

Councilor Kolnaski attended the gathering at the Hampton Inn for the BRAC decision-making at which BRAC voted 7 to 1 (1 abstained) to remove the Submarine Base from the closure list. She also attended the Permanent School Building Committee meeting on August 18, a special event by the United Way honoring the memory of Gerry Smith, and the Annual Commemoration Ceremony and Memorial Wreath Laying at Fort Griswold.

Councilor Bartinik attended the gathering at the Hampton Inn, the Permanent School Building Committee meeting, and two meetings for negotiations between the teachers and the Board of Education.

Councilor Skrmetti attended the Permanent School Building Committee meeting.

Councilor Billing attended the Permanent School Building Committee meeting.

Councilor Sheets received a call from Mr. Tarasevich last week to reiterate his issues with the mobile home. She attended the School Renovation Presentation and addressed the issue of temporary parking at the Merritt Farm with Mayor Watson. She reviewed the Hazard Mitigation Plan more carefully and asked the Mayor if there is emergency backup for the Town Hall. Mayor Watson verified that if there were a smallpox outbreak, Fitch High School would be utilized for inoculations.

Mayor Watson noted that there is a referral on the usage of the Merritt Farm property for parking and he plans to put it on the Committee of the Whole Agenda next week. Groton Schools will be loading a bus tomorrow with supplies and essentials to go to hurricane victims. The Mayor attended a COG meeting on August 17. He also met with Tony Sheridan and Mayor Mendenhall of Ledyard regarding the BRAC discussion on August 17. Mayor Watson attended a ribbon cutting at the new Goodwill Store on August 18. He also attended the Mystic Chamber/GBA meeting and the Permanent School Building Committee meeting on August 18. The Mayor attended the Grand Opening of the Dog Park on August 21 and a luau at the Groton Senior Center on August 23. He observed the BRAC deliberations at the Hampton Inn on August 24 and attended the intern lunch at the Ledge Light Health District on August 26. The Mayor also attended a meeting of the Sub Base Realignment Coalition on August 29. He was presented with a new library card at Groton Library on September 2 and read letters written by participants of the Summer Library Program. Mayor Watson attended the Wreath Laying at Fort Griswold on September 4.

b. Representative Town Meeting

Town Clerk Barbara Tarbox noted that the RTM cancelled the meeting for September but it will be meeting in October.

c. Clerk of the Council

Town Clerk Barbara Tarbox introduced the new employee in the Town Clerk's office, Elga Concepcion.

d. Town Manager

Town Manager Mark Oefinger distributed an excerpt from the Town's web page that covers the Town's Emergency Management Plan which was updated in early 2004. He described the plan and answered Councilors' questions.

Councilor Bond suggested simplifying emergency procedures by broadcasting over local TV channels instead of referring to the Town's web site.

Councilor Skrmetti asked the Town Manager if there is sufficient transportation in the event of an evacuation of senior citizen housing. The Town Manager responded that there are provisions with the bus companies, as well as a list of volunteer drivers.

Councilor Bond asked the Town Manager if there is a list of volunteers assigned to specific emergency situations. The Town Manager responded that there is no such list.

Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent raised concerns regarding volunteers who are not trained. He also noted that the comment period for the notice of intent for the railroad quiet zone ends tomorrow. He expects this issue to be discussed at the next Committee of the Whole meeting.

Councilor Sheets asked the Town Manager to clarify whether Groton's fire districts and police departments can communicate with each other. The Town Manager verified that the City and

Town's police and fire departments can communicate with each other. Councilor Sheets feels that Groton's Meals on Wheels registry could be utilized to identify people with special needs and suggested the creation of a registry of ride providers.

Mayor Watson discussed his concerns for evacuation and transportation procedures for those towns located outside of the EPZ for Millstone. He also requested a referral and asked that emergency protocol be addressed in the next COG meeting.

The Town Manager noted that a few Town employees have offered their services to the American Red Cross and that the Sub Base has been removed from the closure list which goes to the President on Thursday. He received an email from a group known as the Thankful Citizens of Southeastern Connecticut, which is organizing an event at Ocean Beach Park on September 16. Members of the Sub Base Realignment Coalition will be invited to attend Citizenship Day on September 19 at the Groton Senior Center. Aquarion Water Company has requested that their customers limit water usage. He reminded viewers that Groton Family Day is September 10.

e. Town Attorney

The Town Attorney's report was received and sent out with the meeting agenda packets.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Community & Cultural Development - Chairman Billing

No meeting; no report.

b. Economic Development - Chairman Bond

No meeting; no report.

c. Education/Health & Social Services - Chairman Kolnaski

No meeting; no report.

d. Environment & Recreation - Chairman Sheets

No meeting; no report.

e. Finance - Chairman Wright

No meeting; no report.

f. Personnel/Appointments/Rules - Chairman O'Beirne

No meeting; no report.

g. Public Safety - Chairman Skrmetti

No meeting; no report.

h. Public Works - Chairman Bartinik

No meeting; no report.

i. Committee of the Whole - Mayor Watson

The last meeting was on August 23, 2005.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

X. NEW BUSINESS

2004-0325 Recognition of John Ledyard

RESOLUTION APPROVING AND FUNDING A MEMORIAL FOR JOHN LEDYARD

WHEREAS, recent historical research has shown that John Ledyard, a native of the Town of Groton, became widely known as "The Traveler" and made significant contributions toward the exploration of North America and the world, including his recommendation of the Lewis and Clark

Expedition to President Thomas Jefferson, and

WHEREAS, it is fitting to carry out some form of permanent commemoration of John Ledyard during our Town's Tercentennial Year, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves the expenditure of an amount not to exceed \$1,000 from funds appropriated to the Town Council, for the purchase and placement of a plaque or memorial to John Ledyard the Traveler.

A motion was made by Councilor Billing, seconded by Councilor Skrmetti, that this matter be Adopted.

Councilor Kolnaski opposed the resolution in view of the hardships of the hurricane victims, and noted that a proclamation recognizing John Ledyard would be less expensive than purchasing a plaque for \$1,000. She would also like to add a resolution to donate that \$1,000 to the American Red Cross.

Councilor Billing was initially opposed to this resolution, but when the matter was going to be deleted from the Town Council's referral list, a majority of councilors did not want to delete it. Town Historian Carol Kimball has also expressed her support for the recognition of John Ledyard.

A motion to amend the text to read, ". . . . made significant contributions toward the exploration of North America and the world, including his recommendation of the Lewis and Clark Expedition to President Thomas Jefferson," was moved by Councilor Sheets, seconded by Councilor Bond. The motion to amend carried 6 in favor, 1 opposed. (Opposed: Councilor Kolnaski.)

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 6 - Mayor Watson, Councilor Bartinik, Jr., Councilor Billing, Councilor Bond, Councilor Sheets and Councilor Skrmetti
Opposed: 1 - Councilor Kolnaski

2005-0169

Donation of Land (Poirier)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING A DONATION OF LAND

WHEREAS, Ernest Poirier has offered to donate a parcel of land on Island Avenue to the Town of Groton, and

WHEREAS, the subject property, consisting of .214 acres, borders the Town of Groton's Shennecossett Golf Course as well as other Town property, and

WHEREAS, the Groton Planning Commission has considered the property under its authority provided in Section 8-24 of the Connecticut General Statutes, and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission finds that acquisition of this property would be beneficial as an addition to the buffer between the golf course and the existing residences nearby, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council agrees to accept, with gratitude, the donation of the Poirier property of 0.214 acres, more or less, on Island Avenue.

Refer to RTM.

A motion was made by Councilor Sheets, seconded by Councilor Bond, that this matter be Adopted and Referred to the Representative Town Meeting.

The motion carried unanimously.

2005-0242

AFSCME Collective Bargaining Agreement and Pension Agreement

SUCCESSOR PENSION AGREEMENT - AFSCME

WHEREAS, the Town of Groton and Local 818 of Council 4 AFSCME reached a tentative package agreement on a successor collective bargaining agreement for the period July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2010, and a successor pension agreement effective January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2013, and

WHEREAS, the bargaining unit membership has voted to approve both agreements, and

WHEREAS, approval is recommended by the Town's negotiators, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Groton Town Council hereby approves the expenditure of the funds necessary to implement the agreement between the Town of Groton and Local 818 of Council 4 AFSCME for a successor collective bargaining agreement, for the period July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2010, and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Groton Town Council approves the agreement between the Town of Groton and Local 818 of Council 4 AFSCME for a successor pension agreement effective January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2013.

A motion was made by Councilor Bond, seconded by Councilor Skrmetti, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously.

2005-0243**USWA Pension Agreement****RESOLUTION APPROVING A SUCCESSOR PENSION AGREEMENT WITH THE UNITED STEELWORKERS - USWA**

WHEREAS, the Town of Groton and United Steelworkers of America Local 9411-03 have reached a tentative agreement on a successor pension agreement retroactive to July 1, 2005 and in effect through June 30, 2013, and

WHEREAS, the bargaining unit membership has voted to approve the agreement, and

WHEREAS, approval is recommended by the Town's negotiators, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Groton Town Council hereby approves the agreement between the Town of Groton and United Steelworkers of America Local 9411-03 for a successor pension agreement, for the period July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2013.

A motion was made by Councilor Skrmetti, seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously.

2005-0244**Support for CILU Tentative Collective Bargaining Agreement****RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF A TENTATIVE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT - CILU**

WHEREAS, during the course of negotiations, the Town of Groton and Groton Municipal Employees Association, Connecticut Independent Labor Union (CILU) Local 62 reached a tentative agreement on a successor collective bargaining agreement for the period July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2009, and

WHEREAS, tentative agreements were submitted on three occasions to a vote by the bargaining unit membership, and

WHEREAS, the by-laws of the CILU require that any tentative collective bargaining agreement be approved by 2/3rds of those voting, the agreement was rejected on each occasion despite being

supported by a majority of those voting, and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Municipal Employees Relations Act (MERA) state binding interest arbitration proceedings have been implemented, and

WHEREAS, prior to the commencement of the arbitration proceedings the Groton Town Council wishes to go on record as to its support of the tentative agreement between the parties, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Groton Town Council hereby expresses its support of the tentative agreement between the Town of Groton and the Groton Municipal Employees Association, Connecticut Independent Labor Union (CILU) Local 62 Inc.

A motion was made by Councilor Bartinik, Jr., seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

2005-0254 Snow Removal Policy

SNOW REMOVAL POLICY

Councilor Bartinik asked that the Town re-evaluate snow plowing procedures. Mayor Watson responded that this item will be referred to the Public Works Committee.

The Town Manager verified that the Energy Conservation Policy had been referred to the Environment & Recreation Committee in April 2005. He also noted that historically the Town locks in fuel pricing for the year during the fourth quarter.

2005-0255 Donation to American Red Cross for Hurricane Relief

RESOLUTION DONATING \$1,000 TO THE AMERICAN RED CROSS FOR HURRICANE RELIEF

RESOLVED, that the Town Council donate \$1,000 to the American Red Cross for Hurricane Relief.

A motion was made by Councilor Billing, seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, that this matter be Adopted.

Councilor Billing proposed that a donation of \$1,000 be made to aid hurricane victims.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 5 - Mayor Watson, Councilor Billing, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor Sheets and Councilor Skrmetti

Opposed: 2 - Councilor Bartinik, Jr. and Councilor Bond

2005-0253 Hurricane Katrina - Groton's Response

HURRICANE KATRINA - GROTON'S RESPONSE

Councilor Skrmetti requested that Mayor Watson contact Mayor Holloway of Biloxi, Mississippi to discuss hurricane recovery assistance.

Councilor Bond requested that the issue of hurricane relief and donations be placed on next week's meeting agenda for the Committee of the Whole.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 9:25 p.m. was made by Mayor Watson, seconded by Councilor Kolnaski and so voted unanimously.

Attest:

*Barbara Tarbox, Town Clerk
Clerk of the Council*

*Elga Concepcion
Office Assistant*